

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A centralized control platform for use between a switching system and a local system including at least one telephone, the platform comprising:

a trigger recognizer for recognizing command triggers  
input by a user through a telephone;

announcing means for providing predetermined messages to a user;

processor means, operative under the control of a program stored therein and responsive to receipt of an incoming call, for identifying a caller based upon a caller I.D. of the incoming call; and

the processor means further operative under the control of the program and responsive to receipt by the trigger recognizer of a first command trigger entered by the user, for controlling the announcing means to announce the identified caller.

2. The centralized control platform of Claim 1, wherein the processor means is further operative under the control of the program and responsive to receipt by the trigger recognizer of a second command trigger entered by the user, for forwarding the incoming call to a selected procedure.

3. The centralized control platform of Claim 2, wherein the selected procedure comprises playing a message to the incoming call.

4. The centralized control platform of Claim 2, wherein the selected procedure comprises recording a message from the incoming call.

5. The centralized control platform of Claim 1, wherein the trigger recognizer comprises a voice recognizer for recognizing characters and commands spoken by the user.

6. The centralized control platform of Claim 1, wherein the trigger recognizer comprises a DTMF digit recognizer for recognizing DTMF digits entered by the user.

7. A centralized control platform located between a switching system and a local system including at least one telephone for accessing a peripheral system, the platform comprising:

5 a trigger recognizer for recognizing command triggers input by a user through a telephone; and

processor means, operative under the control of a program stored therein and responsive to receipt by the trigger recognizer of a first command trigger entered by the user, for  
10 providing access to the peripheral system via the telephone;

the processor means further operative under the control of the program and responsive to receipt by the trigger recognizer of a second command trigger, for controlling operation of the selected peripheral system.

8. The centralized control platform of Claim 7, wherein the trigger recognizer comprises a voice recognizer for recognizing characters and commands spoken by the user.

9. The centralized control platform of Claim 7, wherein the trigger recognizer comprises a DTMF digit recognizer for recognizing DTMF digits entered by the user.

10. A centralized control platform for providing a variety of telephone services to a local telephone system having at least one telephone, comprising:

a local interface for connecting the platform to at least one of the telephones of the local telephone system;

a communications circuit for interfacing the platform to external communications means;

processing means interconnected with the local interface and communications circuit for providing the user with command triggered access to a plurality of telephone services, the processor further comprising:

trigger recognition means for recognizing command  
triggers input by a user over the communications  
interface and communications circuit; and

15     announcing means for providing predetermined  
messages to the user.

5     11. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein  
the processing means further includes means for identifying a  
caller based upon a caller I.D. number in an incoming call  
received over the communication circuit and for controlling  
the announcing means to announce the identified caller in  
response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger  
recognition means.

12. The centralized control platform of Claim 11 wherein  
the processing means further includes means for forwarding the  
incoming call to a selected telephone service in response to  
receipt of a command trigger by the trigger recognition means.

13. The centralized control platform of Claim 12,  
wherein the selected procedure comprises playing a message to  
the incoming call.

14. The centralized control platform of Claim 12,  
wherein the selected procedure comprises recording a message  
from the incoming call.

15. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the processing means further includes means for forwarding all incoming calls to a telephone service for recording messages in response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger  
5 recognition means.

16. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the processing means further includes means for providing access to a selected peripheral system by the centralized control platform in response to receipt of a command trigger  
5 by the trigger recognition means.

17. The centralized control platform of Claim 14 wherein the processing means further include means for controlling the accessed peripheral system through a telephone handset in response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger  
5 recognition means.

18. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the processing means further includes means for controlling the announcing means to request the user to enter information identifying a destination number to be dialed in response to  
5 receipt of a command trigger by the trigger recognition means.

19. The centralized control platform of Claim 18 wherein the processing means further includes means for transferring the identifying information out over the communications circuit in response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger recognition means.

20. The centralized control platform of Claim 18 wherein the processing means further includes means for storing the received identifying information for subsequent retrieval and use by the user in response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger recognition means.

21. The centralized control platform of Claim 18 wherein the trigger recognition means comprises a voice recognizer and the identifying information comprises voice commands.

22. The centralized control platform of Claim 18 wherein the trigger recognition means comprises a DTMF digit recognizer and the identifying information comprises DTMF digits.

23. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the processing means further includes:

means for controlling the announcement means to request a validation code to provide a user access to the platform in

5 response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger recognition means; and

means for providing access to the platform if the user enters a proper validation code in response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger recognition means.

24. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the processing means further includes means for enabling the user to access messages for the user in response to an entered validation code.

25. The centralized control platform of Claim 24 wherein processing means further include means for controlling playback of the messages in response to receipt of a command trigger by the trigger recognition means.

26. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the centralized control platform and the local telephone system are wireline connected.

27. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the centralized control platform and the local telephone system are wirelessly connected.

28. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the local telephone system comprises a PBX system.

29. The centralized control platform of Claim 10 wherein the processing means further includes:

means for accessing a plurality of outbound calling functions in response to receipt of a first command trigger by the trigger recognition means; and

means for initiating an outbound call from one of the plurality of outbound calling functions in response to receipt of a second command trigger by the trigger recognition means.

30. A centralized control platform for use between a switching system and a local system including at least one telephone, the platform comprising:

a voice recognizer for recognizing voice commands input by a user through the telephone;

processor means, operative under the control of a program stored therein and responsive to receipt by the voice recognizer of a first voice command entered by the user, for accessing a plurality of outbound calling functions; and

the processor means further operative under the control of the program and responsive to receipt by the voice recognizer of a second voice command, for initiating an outbound call from one of the plurality of calling functions.

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